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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#) [LY](#)

SUBJECT: REAL PROGRESS SEEN BUT SUDAN PREPARES ADADA FOR PROTRACTED
SOFA TALKS

¶1. (SBU) During a December 11 meeting with Joint Special Representative Rudolphe Adada, mid-ranking Sudanese officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense agreed to negotiate the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)'s Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) based on the UN/AU draft but "promised it would be a long process," Adada's chief of staff, Abdulrahman Abubakar, told Poloff after the meeting. The first negotiating session on the SOFA is scheduled for December 12. Sudan reiterated its position that all discussions on UNAMID deployment be considered through the Tripartite Mechanism. The Government also indicated that a team of its lawyers, including several from its overseas missions, will be present for the SOFA discussions. Adada insisted that all UNAMID issues be addressed "bilaterally," as he represents both the UN and the AU.

¶2. (SBU) Sudan admitted that unrestricted access for UNAMID, including night flights, is "enshrined" in UN Security Council Resolution 1769 but continues to demand that the UN/AU first upgrade the air facilities in Darfur, prior even to conducting medical evacuations. The Government contended that current airports cannot accommodate night flights. Adada tried to "de-link" the issue of airport capacity from the policy question of whether Sudan will allow night flights, given that UNAMID helicopters should have the technology to fly in the dark (once those choppers are actually identified and arrive).

TCCs Still Sticky

¶3. (SBU) Sudan maintained its rejection of Scandinavian contributions for UNAMID. "They don't even want to hear about the Nordics," said Abubakar. Sudanese officials said that they will wait for Egyptian and Ethiopian units to deploy before deciding on other troop contributors, suggesting that these two countries could compensate for a potential deficit in forces by increasing their contributions. Recalling its participation in previous UN recruitment visits to potential TCCs, Sudan proposed a "partnership" and requested its officials be part of any future UN/AU assessment missions.

Some Progress

¶4. (SBU) The Government has made some real progress in critical issues effecting UNAMID transition in the next few weeks, according to Abubakar. On December 10, Sudan released the communications equipment that had languished in bureaucratic red-tape. In addition, the Government agreed that UNAMID troops can don blue helmets/berets, with the caveat that a "distinctive sign" on their

uniforms acknowledges the AU's involvement in the mission. Abubakar noted, however, that the UN and AU still need to agree on the insignia for the helmets.

15. (SBU) Land issues for UNAMID facilities in Darfur have also been resolved, with one notable exception. "There is absolutely no problem anywhere with land, except for El Geneina," said Abubakar. He attributed the delay to the local West Darfur authorities, who objected to the UN/AU's chosen site because it is near a Sudanese military camp. In Nyala, Sudan agreed to allocate seven helicopter "parking spaces" to UNAMID.

16. (SBU) Comment: Real progress, albeit painfully complex and involved at times, is being made in resolving issues related to UNAMID deployment in the past days. Aside from the major issue of TCC composition (where there seems to still be some flexibility on the possibility of Nepalese and Thai troops), Sudan has improved its support for this massive mission. The challenge is to continue to encourage/pressure them towards cooperation with UN/AU effort which, aside from Sudanese policies, has its own major internal problems. End comment.

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